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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/024,557	12/21/2001	Takuya Ogane	2185-0607P	3620
2292	7590	05/04/2004	EXAMINER	
BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH PO BOX 747 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			LEE, RIP A	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1713	

DATE MAILED: 05/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/024,557	OGANE, TAKUYA 
Examiner	Art Unit	
Rip A. Lee	1713	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 February 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This office action follows a request for continued examination (RCE) under 37 § C.F.R. 1.114, filed on February 6, 2004. Applicants have amended claims 1-12.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is not clear what is meant by the term "shapeless." All solids have some shape or form since they are three-dimensional objects. Furthermore, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree of "shapelessness." That is, it is not clear what constitutes desirable "shape" *versus* "shapeless." One of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention because it remains unclear how said shapeless component can be identified and separated.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

5. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,344,528 to Ushioda *et al.* for the same reasons set forth in previous office actions.

6. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,054,406 to Smith for the same reasons set forth in previous office actions.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments have been considered fully, but they are not persuasive. Applicants maintain their position that the prior art does not teach the subject matter of the present claims because it does not teach removal of a fine powdery component or shapeless component. Applicants contend that the cited patents use of the term "supernatant" means that the liquid layer is clear, as defined by *Hawley's Chemical Dictionary*.

As indicated in the previous response to arguments, the current rejection is based on obviousness, rather than on anticipation. That the prior art does not state specifically "removing a fine powdery component and/or shapeless component" was acknowledged in the basis for the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). However, in light of the fact that the steps to make the catalyst, outlined in the prior art, are essentially the same as those described in the present claims, a reasonable basis exists to believe that the supernatant is not devoid of such material. That is, where processes are essentially the same, there is no reason not to believe that the "fine powdery component" and "shapeless component" are not formed in the catalyst preparation step. In this case, the finely divided, flocculent material, which does not settle out, would be removed, as per the steps outlined in the present invention.

The burden of proof was shifted to Applicants to establish an unobviousness difference between their invention and that of the prior art. Outside arguments of counsel, Applicants have not furnished evidence to the contrary.

In conclusion, there is no dispute over the definition of the word "supernatant," as presented in *Hawley's*. However, absolute definitions can not be translated to actual practice so readily without experimental considerations. The *prima facie* case of obviousness, established properly in the initial office action, reflects this notion.

In meeting their burden of establishing unobviousness, Applicants and their representative are invited to meet with the examiner to discuss any experimental results to support their case.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rip A. Lee whose telephone number is (571)272-1104. The examiner can be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu, can be reached at (571)272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <<http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>>. Should you have questions on the access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll free).

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April 28, 2004


DAVID W. WU
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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